



# WESTERN MONTANA CHAPTER

## Safari Club International

### Mark your calendars!

The Western Montana Chapter of SCI will be hosting a Holiday Mixer on Saturday, December 3rd at the Doubletree Hotel Edgewater in Missoula. A brief Board Meeting will be held from 6:00 - 7:00 pm followed by hors d'oeuvres and a no-host bar. Everyone is welcome! Bring your hunting pictures and plan on a fun evening. There is no cost to attend, but we are asking that you RSVP to 406.273.7224 or email us at info@westernmtsci.org. This will help us ensure we have enough food!

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## President's Message

Our September Banquet once again made me unbelievably proud to be associated with such a tremendous organization, and such outstanding hunters, sportsmen and sportswomen. The banquet came together with hundreds of volunteer hours and strong support from our many donors. Feedback from our attendees said it was one of the finest banquets in our chapter history! Special thanks to everyone that attended and supported the important work of the Western Montana Chapter of SCI.



Many folks left the banquet with some great trips and items, so please keep us posted as they are enjoyed. We'd love to update our web page with your successes!

As we continue to be challenged in these economic times and the disjointed arms of our government and its agencies, I see sportsmen and women continue to unselfishly step up for our cause. We are recognized as a very dedicated and influential organization, that we now have to be cautious, and fully explore who hides behind fictitious names posing as hunting or sportsman's groups. These folks with anti-hunting, anti-access, anti-gun and anti-multiple use land management agendas are surfacing everywhere.

Who are Montana Hunters and Anglers Action? I know they certainly do not represent me as a Montana hunter and angler! They are evidently a new attack group focused on Dennis Rehberg, with undisclosed Democratic financial ties to the likes of the National Wildlife Federation and their supply-chain affiliates, a former CNN producer, as well as aides to powerful Democratic senators in their membership. You will undoubtedly hear their ads, because they are spending a quarter of a million dollars attacking Congressman Rehberg right now. I see this as just the beginning of such disingenuous rhetoric.

Friends and members, we are about to see one of the most contentious, far-reaching senate battles in recent history right here in our state. I can proudly say that Congressman Rehberg has been a true friend to our organization. He has given unwavering support to our cause of upholding the true legacy of conservation – where hunting and multiple use land stewardship practices are vital tools in big game management and improved habitat development.

For instance, Congressman Rehberg's co-sponsorship of H.R. 1581 promotes the sustainable use of our natural resources, with efforts to access our (and I mean OUR) federal ground that has been locked up in DC bureaucracy for decades. This land has been managed with wilderness restrictions - even though the lands have been surveyed and inventoried and found not suitable for wilderness!

H.R. 1581 would return land management back to local management plans; creating jobs while managing healthy forests with increased forage for ungulate herds, reducing catastrophic wildfires and providing greater access for public recreation opportunities



## About Safari Club International

SCI is committed to:

- Providing value to members by shaping policies and legislation that protect the freedom to hunt locally, nationally and internationally.
- Keeping members informed regarding issues that impact hunting while educating and entertaining members with engaging articles about the rich heritage of hunting in all forms of media.
- Providing a community for hunters worldwide where camaraderie is enjoyed and expert information is exchanged, and where members are able to participate in a market for quality hunting goods and services.

The **Western Montana Chapter of Safari Club International** is a non-profit organization dedicated to conserving wildlife and preserving hunting. As a 501 (4) organization that works at the state and local level, as well as nationally through its parent organization (SCI), we support issues that protect the right to hunt and we partner with other pro-hunter organizations that support wildlife conservation. SCI is first in the field with pro-hunting legislation, litigation against anti-hunting initiatives and international advocacy for hunting. We are "SCI-FIRST FOR HUNTERS".

### **2011/2012 Chapter Officers are as follows:**

Chapter President - Jon Wemple, Victor  
Chapter Vice-President - Matt Ulberg, Lolo  
Secretary/Treasurer - Bonita Smith, Phillipsburg

#### Directors:

Gary Burdett, Polson  
Justin Burdett, Victor  
Gary Wardell, Kalispell  
Jack Wemple, Victor

### **Become Involved...**

Consider joining the Western Montana Chapter of SCI and become involved today in helping to further our hunting, conservation and education initiatives. If you are already a member and wish to join one of our many committees, you can contact us at [info@westernmtsci.org](mailto:info@westernmtsci.org) or phone Western Montana Chapter President, Jon Wemple at (406.369.1771).

We welcome your involvement and look forward to getting to know you better!

continued from front page...

where suitable.

Again, imagine forest management back to LOCAL MANAGEMENT. What a concept!

Does any of this sound familiar? Kind of like the fight to bring wolf management back to Montana, where we can now hopefully accomplish management objectives on a local level. We still have a long way to go with wolves, and pressure must be kept on our state wildlife managers, but at least the fight is local now. Such policies should not be dictated by the special interest, financially driven objectives of these groups pretending to be one of us, with their powerful political ties, and who don't know the first thing about the true ramifications of the wolf catastrophe, or the importance of multi-use forest management practice.

Check out the full overview of H.R. 1581 and the "Return to Sane Forest Management" position page on our website at [www.westernmtsci.org](http://www.westernmtsci.org) and make your determination from there.

Safari Club International and your local chapter are dedicated to protecting our rights as hunters locally. This commitment is far-reaching - and includes work on substantive issues such as public access, rewriting misused laws (like the antiquated Endangered Species Act) and the list goes on. In fact, there are 190 local chapters in our organization that draw from our powerful parent organization in Washington, DC and Tucson, and its resources when local issues arise as well.

I feel a bit picked on here in Western Montana - we had wolves crammed down our throats decimating our famed ungulate herds that took us (sportsmen) nearly a century to build AND while we are blessed to have nearly 27 million acres of federal lands in our state, nearly 6 million of these acres are tied up in limbo under improper wilderness designation management. H.R 1581 will provide the much needed first step for proper management of these Montana acres.

Let's continue to work to bring an end to some of this nonsense. Bring wildlife and land management back locally where it belongs. The cumulative voices of true hunters and sportsmen need to be heard. Please be weary of these groups posing to be one of us.

Blessings and Good Hunting!

*Jon Wemple, Chapter President*

# Chris Clasby Selected for SCI Pathfinder Award

Safari Club International recently announced that Mr. Chris Clasby of Missoula, Montana has been selected for the 2012 Pathfinder Award. This prestigious award is presented to individuals who are faced with overcoming a physical challenge or disability, discovering previously unexplored regions of self-esteem, self-worth, courage, persistence, and determination. The recipients are individuals who have a “never quit” attitude and who are recognized as ambassadors for other “pathfinders” seeking leadership when faced with similar challenges. In honor of this award, Montana Outfitters and Guides Association joined with four Montana SCI chapters, including the Western Montana SCI Chapter to which Chris belongs, and four other State Associations in supporting the nomination of Chris Clasby for the 2012 Pathfinder Award.

Clasby, a former high school rodeo contestant and wrestler, was paralyzed in a tragic vehicle accident that took the life of his friend and rodeo traveling partner and left Chris a quadriplegic with a traumatic brain injury. Chris’s life was in the balance while he lay in a coma for two months following the accident.

With great focused commitment and determination, Chris achieved goals he had set for himself physically, mentally and spiritually. Since the accident he has earned a Bachelor of Arts in English Education and went on to earn a Masters Degree. Chris taught high school English for a time and now works for the University of Montana under the MonTECH program where his job includes helping Montanans with disabilities obtain tools they need to work, go to school, and live independently. Half of his job involves coordinating Montana Access to Outdoor Recreation (MATOR) program to help Montanans with disabilities recreate outdoors independently.

Chris has also rediscovered his passion for the outdoors and rekindled his love of hunting. Six months after leaving inpatient rehabilitation, Chris was gifted the SR-77 gun mount and an adapted .243 from his friend Hank Emerson (U.S. Army Lt. General, retired) with whom Chris hunted in high school. The gift came with a card describing the purpose of the gift being “so that their hunting memories could continue.”

This was the inspiration he needed and has since enjoyed many days in the field with family and friends in pursuit of elk, deer, antelope and other game. Chris knows firsthand the remarkable benefits that accrue from days in the field and says that he has revisited his relationship with God and has found spiritual solace in his outdoor pursuits.



Chris’s nomination for the Pathfinder Award by Dr. John Harlan of Missoula was supported by thousands of sportsmen from many different states who were taken with his story of personal triumph over extreme adversity, service to others, and recovery through the wholesome pursuit of hunting. His path from high school wrestler and rodeo cowboy, to paraplegic, and now a champion of service to others through hunting and shooting sport is testament to a never-quit attitude that allowed him to overcome extreme physical, mental and spiritual challenges by focusing on his abilities rather than disabilities.

On his selection Chris expressed appreciation for the award, credited the many good people around him who have contributed to his opportunities, and acknowledged the other highly qualified candidates who had also been nominated. Concerning his award Chris expressed an interest in “using the recognition as a platform for encouraging others who face adversity to reconnect with the outdoors and pursue the passions that make for a fulfilled and productive life.”

On receiving the award itself Chris says “The Pathfinder is not an individual award, but rather a shared award with the many people who have contributed to my opportunities to pursue life’s pleasures.”

Like all true Pathfinders the trail blazed by Chris’s selfless commitment to service, leadership, courage, and compassion is one that inspires others to follow. Awarding Chris Clasby the 2012 Pathfinder award honors not only the man but the award itself. Chris will formally receive the award in Las Vegas at the Safari Club International Convention held in Las Vegas in January 2012.

# Hunting Corner...

## Mary's First Elk

*New Western Montana SCI member, Mary Watne gets the hunting bug...*

**H**aving been raised in rural Montana and in a hunting family, I've been around the activity my whole life. Many days were spent in the field growing up around my grandpa, uncles and cousins, brother, and dad who all hunted. Sometimes I'd go with them and sometimes I just watched the preparation and heard stories afterward. Other times I was right there with them, in the thick cover sharing excitement and fear with my brother while he teased large bull elk just yards away while bow hunting. Maybe because I'm the youngest or because I was a girl, I was never



the one to shoot, but I didn't miss it. As an adult, I've hunted even more with my boyfriend, relatives and friends but have spent most of my time looking through a viewfinder... until this year.

Several years ago I did have the chance to shoot my first deer and made good on the opportunity. I spent some time practicing shooting in advance with a borrowed gun and then tasted the sweetness of victory and satisfaction of being the one to bring home some meat. Still, however, I hadn't caught the bug and didn't have an overwhelming desire to be the one marking a tag. Everything changed when I acquired my own rifle at the end of last hunting season, a .308 in the classic Savage Model 99. With a stock that fits my short arms perfectly, a bipod to ensure a good rest,

and a new sling with pink stitching, the months leading up to this year's big game season passed slowly. I was well practiced in shooting and ready to create some memories.

Our opening day tradition came with new anticipation - and I launched into the morning hunt with my camera in hand and a few extra pounds across my back. We sat in the darkness awaiting dawn and I visualized the golden color I'd seen in a viewfinder many times, but never one with crosshairs. Dawn


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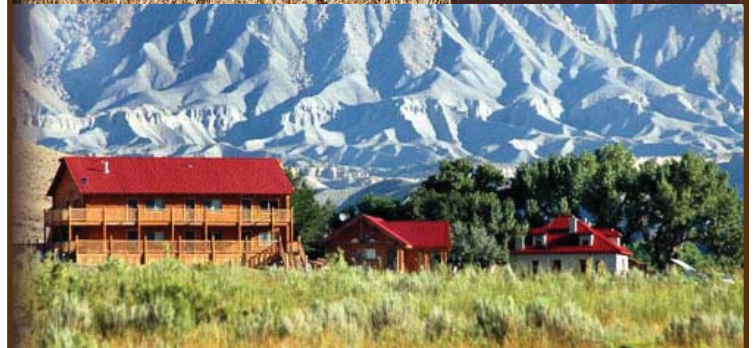
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came and went, and that anticipation became a little disappointment. Like many times before, we'd chosen the wrong location. I set the camera aside and left it on the ground with my companions as I took a walk, as much to dissuade disappointment as in hopes of getting lucky to find a stray animal. My feet were heavier than normal as we later walked back toward camp for lunch and discussion of an evening hunt.

A few short hours later, we sat on a bank overlooking a broad willow bottom and glassing for movement or color, both of which revealed themselves in the form of about a dozen elk cautiously stepping into cover a quarter mile away but coming our direction. My hands found my rifle stock as I came to my feet along with Dan, and we angled down the bank and across a ditch and into the willows on our side. My renewed energy kept me easily half a pace behind Dan as we picked our way around and under the thick willows headed in the direction we had last seen the elk. Chances of intersecting those elk in the maze of cover were low, but Dan has a knack for making that happen. Each passing step brought more sign of elk habitat, and indicated we'd discovered what appeared to be a regular hiding spot.

Movement ahead through the willows simultaneously caught my eye and Dan's, and we both dropped to our stomachs. I automatically unfolded my bipod legs, placed the rifle butt in my shoulder, and placed my left fist under the pistol grip like I'd learned at the range. Looking over my scope, I could see several different figures coming our way behind distant cover. I consciously subdued my emotions and breathed deeply as the lead cow cautiously stepped into the clearing in front of us, nose in the air obviously checking for danger. I lowered my view and found her in my scope as Dan nearly silently whispered, "Take your time. They don't know we're here."

That lead cow turned slightly and stopped, as if posing, my crosshairs found the line behind her front shoulder, and I clicked the safety off with my thumb. I didn't hear the rifle fire, but felt it jump and heard the instantaneous whack of a solid hit. Looking over the scope, I witnessed the frantic scramble of multiple elk leaving mine standing in the same location with her head low. The motion of injecting another shell with the lever action was unconscious and I found her shoulder in my crosshairs again. The second shot confirmed my first - and verified a clean finish.

The exhilaration I'd been subduing now burst into excitement and I felt myself shaking. The years of hunting with others had now come together through my own experience, and I now had my own story to tell. I could now understand the motivation to prepare, the joy of direct participation, the appreciation of conservation efforts, and respect and gratitude to my cow elk. I realized I had just become a new member of a group. ■



# Hunting Corner...

## Two Hundred Eighty Inches in Four Days

*SCI Member and Five Valleys Archery Club Vice President Rick McCool experiences an incredible four days in 2009...*

**W**ell, there I was, standing on a small finger ridge overlooking the Bitterroot River south of Missoula, Montana. I was bow hunting the river bottom for a whitetail buck. Artie dropped me off at the top with my bow then drove around to the bottom to pick me up. I was still hunting down the ridge when I was surprised by a 4x4 whitetail buck walking along a narrow trail just above the bottom of the draw, followed by a spike and extremely nice 6x5 buck. They were about 120 yards away moving up the draw and would pass me at approximately 45 yards. They were moving slowly along the trail nibbling grass as they walked by - with no idea I was there. I had ranged a tree and knew my shot would be 45 yards downhill. When the 6x5 reached the tree, he stopped and gave me a perfect shot. At full draw, I settled my 40 yard pin high and right behind his shoulder, held hard, squeezed easy on my release and watched as the arrow flew perfectly. He jumped straight up in the air, mule kicked then took off on a dead run up the draw and out of sight.



I sat down, shaking just a little because I had just shot the nicest whitetail buck I had ever shot with my bow. I waited about 10 minutes then walked down and found my arrow. I started following an impressive blood trail, when about one hundred yards up the draw, the trail took a turn to the left. The buck was lying just around the bend dead as a door nail.

I field dressed and tagged the deer then went to find Artie. We loaded up the deer, went home and skinned and hung him in my shop. Next we headed to the taxidermist so he could finish capping the head for a perfect mount. I would have a trophy I'd cherish for the rest of my life. It felt like I had dreamed the whole hunt, but I didn't and the excitement felt good.

When I look back on how easy it seemed to get this buck, I feel like the moon the stars and the universe all must have aligned for this awesome moment. I have had hundreds of plans to outsmart whitetail bucks: hung tree stands, set bound blinds, setting-up perfect ambush, and sure nothing would go wrong. But, 95 out of 100 times, the whitetail buck seems to win.

Three days later my good friends from Southern California arrived to hunt deer and elk: Jim, Dennis, Charlie and Rich. I told the story of the 6x5 a few times, and then we ate back-strap steaks from my deer for dinner.

The next day we got permission from a rancher to hunt elk on a ranch east of town. He said he had about 60 elk that came down every night eating his hay crop. Our plan was to go up the draws, get on the trails they were using, set up and wait them out. Which we did!

The spot I chose was a half mile up a draw that lay farthest to the east on the rancher's property. I was below a huge boulder that was 30 yards from the most well used trail I had ever seen. I cleaned the ground, made sure there were good shooting lanes and settled in for a late afternoon of blind hunting. An hour before dark I looked behind me and saw nine whitetail deer coming down the draw. Six were bucks, but none were big enough to burn my "A tag" on. After half an hour, they passed heading down to the hay field, and I was back on elk watch. I decided to check around the east end of my rock to see if any elk were on their way when right in front of me was a huge 4x4 whitetail buck at eight yards. I

froze, not believing he had not busted me, and wondered where he had come from. He had his head down so I took two big steps backwards, knocked an arrow, and lifted up my bow so that the upper limbs covered my face just as the buck walked by at four yards.

I had used my river bottom tag on the 6x5 whitetail buck and had planned to use my "A tag" on a mule deer buck in the eastern part of the state. I chose not to take the 4x4 and just enjoyed the moment when I saw another, much larger whitetail buck following the 4x4. He was a huge 5x5 with a lot of mass and walked by on the same trail at four yards. I held perfectly still as he passed. When the buck was at 15 yards I decided he was big enough to use my "A tag" on if he gave me a shot. He was walking straight away so I decided to draw my bow and get ready to shoot. When I drew my bow, the 4x4 buck spooked which immediately alerted the 5x5. He froze in his tracks. I watched the hair bristle on his back and his tail go straight up in the air. He knew I was there but had no idea where I was. With my twenty-yard pin settled on his vitals, I held hard and gently squeezed the release. The arrow hit perfectly, disappearing behind the shoulder. He took off down the draw and straight for my truck. I could not believe by good fortune. I just had shot the new best whitetail of my life and it all happened within four days. I leaned back against my big rock looked up and thanked the good Lord for my good fortune. The deer had gone close to three hundred yards and piled up under a huge tree that sat all alone in the middle of a grass pasture. I field dressed and tagged the monster buck. I went in search of my friends and the truck. They helped me load the buck in the back and we were soon home-ward bound. The next day found me back at the taxidermist with a huge smile on my face.



In hind sight, it really wasn't much of an elk hunt. They were totally nocturnal and the only time we saw the elk was at four-thirty in the morning when they crossed the road in front of the truck heading up the mountain. We never did catch up, but every time I see those two bucks on my trophy room wall I think back on four very special days in late September when the moon, stars, and the universe all aligned and gave me the opportunity to take the two best bucks in my life.



Both bucks mounted on a plaque in Rick's trophy room.

I had those two bucks mounted side-by-side on the same plaque by the taxidermist. The 6x5 river bottom buck grossed 135" and the 5x5 buck grossed 145". To this day, those two whitetail bucks are still the number one and two best whitetail bucks I have taken with a bow.

Thanks to my very close friends: Artie, Jim, Dennis, Charlie and Rich and of course my hunting widow of 35 years, Linda, for the most unbelievable four days in my hunting career. ■

# Hunting Corner...

## Christmas Quail

*Sometimes a change in scenery brings a few rewards. Read how R. Thomas Funk of Kalispell, Montana got his first Texas Quail. Thanks for sharing it with us!*

The Old Guide leaned against the pickup and watched as I brought the 20-gauge up to the port arms position, took a deep breath, and began slowly walking down the lane. I hate trying to shoot something when I have an audience, especially him. It is hard to find a reasonable excuse for missing that even sounds plausible. I used up all the good ones when I was young and he was gullible.

The trim Spanish side-by-side balanced comfortably in my hands. Little explosions of dust arose with each step. My mouth was dry. After more than five decades, I was realizing a dream. Just as I cleared the barn, I glanced to my left and the bevy erupted like a land mine under my feet, and they dipped and dodged towards shelter. My heart jumped into my throat as I snapped the shotgun to my shoulder, slipped the safety, and fired the right barrel, then the left. Nothing happened. No birds fell. As I reloaded, I considered how, at fifty-four, I was hunting bobwhite quail for the first time and missing.

I have always loved hunting and reading about hunting during the off-seasons. Jack O'Connor was the first to tease me with little tidbits about quail while hunting with his wife in the desert of northern Mexico. Next came Robert Ruark, Nash Buckingham, and Havilah Babcock. All of these described the bobwhite as an exciting challenge, but living in Northwest Montana, the opportunity to hunt quail never presented itself until circumstances placed me in South Texas during 2007-2008 hunting season.

It began at Christmas time, 2006, when my wife and I decided to retire from education. The following June, I found myself unemployed for the first time in nearly two decades. I took a month off for travel and visiting my grandchildren - and then found a new job landscaping. This job was a Godsend. The physical activity helped me to get into shape - and my boss was nearly as rabid an outdoorsman as me.

In August, The Old Guide, a semi-permanent fixture at the Texas hunting ranch, approached me with the idea of applying for a position as the camp cook for the 2007-2008 season. I had cooked in the Army years before, and due to the seasonal nature of my new job, there was no scheduling conflict. The hunting season in Texas would begin just as the big game season in Montana ended. I discussed the idea with my wife, and she encouraged me to apply. "If nothing else, it will be an adventure," she said.

I met with the ranch manager in late October - and the interview went well. The Old Guide and I would drive to Texas at the end of November. In the mean time, he suggested which firearms to bring. I settled on my twenty-gauge side-by-side for quail, my .357 Magnum Carbine for javelina, wild pigs, and small game, and my Smith and Wesson .357 revolver loaded with rat shot and hollow-points for any unwelcome pests at the lodge. I decided to buy the Texas small game license. This would allow me to hunt quail, javelina, and wild boar.

Following a three-day drive, we arrived in south Texas in time for me to get out of the truck, throw my gear on my bunk, and prepare supper. There was no time to think about hunting for the next month as I refined my rusty culinary skills, cleaned the lodge and the guest rooms, and developed a schedule. During this period, I saw many fine bucks brought to the lodge by clients, including beautiful trophies, and one that scored well over 230 Boone and Crocket. I also listened to the guides and clients discuss the unusually large number of quail coveys they were spying almost daily.

Over the course of the season, one of the guides would bring in a limit of quail from time to time, and he introduced me to their epicurean delights: wrapped in bacon, stuffed with a half of a jalapeño, and roasted slowly over a bed of mesquite coals, or rolled in seasoned flour and deep fat fried to golden perfection.

It wasn't until the Christmas holiday drew near that I could sense a break approaching.

The first morning without clients, The Old Guide took me out and showed me around the ranch. Having

spent the last month just around the lodge, I had no idea just how far the ranch extended. We stopped at the barn and he told me to take my shotgun and walk down the lane next to the barn. I loaded the 20 gauge with 7 1/2 shot and followed his advice. When the birds got up, I thought, "This is going to be too easy." Following my second miss, I stood there dumbfounded. How could I miss? I knew the answer.

As I approached the pickup, The Old Guide didn't even look up at me. He just scratched his chin, began cleaning a fingernail with his ever-present hunting knife, and nonchalantly asked, "How many did you get?"

I wanted to lie, and I tried to concoct an alibi, but I couldn't think of anything new, so I settled for the truth. "None. I didn't pick a target; I just flock shot," I replied.

"There's a lot more air around them than there is in them," he said as he slipped the knife back in its sheath and climbed into the truck.

I pondered this statement for a while and I couldn't fault his logic. Next, he dropped me off at a tripod stand so I could watch several senderos, a lane cut through the tall cactus. I placed my carbine and a pair of binoculars on the platform and climbed up. Over the next two hours, I watched does, fawns, and bucks of every description. I also spied several family groups of javelinias, but they had taken up a position just beyond the largest buck, and my instructions were clear. Don't shoot towards the bucks! I think The Old Guide was worried I might undershoot, accidentally of course. Once again, I couldn't fault his logic.

By 9 a.m., I was ready to come in. It is surprising how cold a north wind can be even in south Texas. That afternoon we could not locate any coveys, so I climbed into a new blind and I watched until dark. Again, there were deer a plenty including a monster eleven-pointer, but all of the small game stayed well out of range of my carbine.

The following morning was Christmas day. I rolled out of my bunk at 6:00 a.m. and washed my face in cold water. The coffee was on and The Old Guide was already up drinking his second cup. Following a spartan breakfast, we were out the door. The morning was obscure with fog as we left the lodge, but the sun soon burned that away. The spot we headed for was at the far edge of the ranch. When we arrived, a covey was sitting on the road enjoying a dust bath. They scurried into the brush as we stopped. I stepped out of the truck, loaded my shotgun and filled my pockets with extra shells.

As I walked into the brush, I kept reminding myself, "Pick a target! Pick a target! Pick a..." The whirl of wings from all sides startled me, but I managed to locate and focus on one bird and brought my shotgun to my shoulder. The bird had just started to bank to the left towards a clump of prickly pear cactus when the Lady of Spain spoke, and a poof of feathers and a cart-wheeling bird attested to the fact that I had finally connected with my first bobwhite quail.

The rest of the covey disappeared, but I was intent on the single bird that lay still, caught in the barbs of the very cactus it had been trying to reach for cover. I carefully retrieved the bird, held it and smoothed its feathers.

As The Old Guide snapped my photo, he smiled and asked, "Now that you've taken your first bobwhite, was it everything you hoped for?"

I thought about his question; all of the stories I had read on bobwhite hunting flashed through my mind, and I smiled. I was a member of the fraternity at last. Then I thought of all the fine bucks that I had seen harvested this season, and I felt no envy. In my hand, weighing a few ounces was the trophy I came to Texas hoping to collect. I nodded my head and answered, "Yes! Yes it was!"



# Youth Hunter...

## Sight-in Day

Every year the Western Montana Chapter of SCI tries to find a deserving individual to take hunting. These individuals generally have additional challenges to getting out in the field than the average person. The 2011 Western Montana SCI Disabled Youth Hunter is Dakota Hendrix.

Check out the pictures of his practice day out at the Wemple Ranch. The shooting apparatus was provided by Chris Clasby (Pathfinder Award Winner featured on page 3). At 75 yards, Dakota put two in the diamond and his last shot is in the picture at left. Great job, Dakota! Looks like you are ready to kill an elk.



# Open Letter to Sportsmen

Fellow Sportsmen, Members, and Non-Members,

Concern over the federal government initiating the largest land grab in the history of these the United States of America; I decided it was time to become involved. In February 2009 after extensive research to determine which organizations were doing the most to protect the rights of the true conservationist, the hunters of America, I volunteered to join the Board of Directors of the Western Montana Chapter of Safari Club International (SCI) located in Missoula. I had been a member of SCI for over 25 years, but until then I was content to be an armchair participant. By being an active member of our board of directors, I have had the opportunity to be directly involved in the future of our rights as hunters here in Montana.

During my research, I found that SCI's policy was to keep 70% of locally raised funds right here in western Montana. Through our fund raising events and membership dues as well as matching funds from SCI in Tucson, the Western Montana Chapter of SCI has been able to support local conservation efforts totaling 1.8 million over the last decade.

Please take us up on our offer and help increase our local membership. If you know someone who is not yet a member and who might enjoy being a part of this great organization, we are making this offer. We will sponsor the first 15 new memberships for one year, pay the \$65 national membership fee and enroll them as a new Western Montana Chapter member, a \$20 value. Further, we will give those new members an SCI inscribed hunting knife valued at \$35 for a total value of \$120 all for one payment of \$30. In turn, we would ask that they consider becoming a member of our board of directors. Come and be a part of what we are doing to support conservation and hunting right here in Northwest Montana as well as around the world.

Their involvement will allow them to meet other enthusiastic sportsmen like yourselves who care about the future of our national heritage. It will allow all of us to help perpetuate the sport of hunting for future generations.

The Safari Club International Annual Hunters' Convention in Las Vegas will take place February 1st through 4th. It is an exclusive members-only show. I attended the show in 2010 and was impressed with literally miles of exhibits and the infinite selection of educational seminars available. You will have the opportunity to meet other sportsman, guides, outfitters, and artisans from the four corners of the globe.

Visit our local website at [www.westernmtsci.org](http://www.westernmtsci.org). Or SCI's International Headquarters website [www.safariclub.org](http://www.safariclub.org). You can also contact me for more information at 406-261-0731 or email me at [wardell@digisys.net](mailto:wardell@digisys.net). Credit card orders can be processed through Traci Ulberg at 406-273-7224.

Please plan to join us at our evening social on Saturday, December 3, 2011 at the Double Tree Hotel Edgewater in Missoula. We will have a brief Board Meeting from 6:00 - 7:00 pm (everyone welcome) followed by hors d'oeuvres and a no-host bar at 7:00 pm.

Sincerely,

*Gary W. Wardell*

Board Member, Western Montana Chapter SCI  
Disabled Hunter Chair



## Submit an article or hunting story!

Consider submitting an article or hunting story for publication in the Western Montana Chapter Newsletter! Articles or stories must be no more than three pages in length and must contain contact information for the author. Graphics and photos are welcome!

Email submissions to [editor@westernmtsci.org](mailto:editor@westernmtsci.org).



**Western Montana Chapter SCI**  
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Mark your calendars for our Holiday Mixer on Saturday, December 3rd at the DoubleTree Hotel Edgewater in Missoula, Montana. A brief Board Meeting will be held at 6:00 pm, followed by hors d'oeuvres and a no-host bar at 7:00 pm. There is no cost to attend, but we are asking that you RSVP to 406.273.7224 or email us at [info@westernmtsci.org](mailto:info@westernmtsci.org). This will help us ensure we have enough food!

## Photo Contest

**Submit a picture!** We had so much fun looking at the photos from the Spring Photo Contest that we decided to run one again this fall! The theme for this contest: "Hunting - Greatest Moment". It doesn't have to be a big trophy either. Maybe it is hanging out around the campfire after a long day of hiking or taking a youth out for their first hunt. Just send us your favorite hunting picture! They must be high quality (200 dpi minimum) and should be emailed to [photos@westernmtsci.org](mailto:photos@westernmtsci.org) by **December 1st**.

1st prize will be two free banquet tickets (\$75 value) to the 2012 Banquet. 2nd place will receive a \$50 Cabela's gift card and 3rd place will receive an SCI knife. Winners will also be published online and in our newsletter!

We would like to wish everyone a wonderful holiday season!

